



[Left and above] Surrounded by 25 acres of grounds, Barony Castle Hotel would work well for an outdoor ceremony in front of the gleaming white castle, under the forest canopy or at the 16th-century altar



**KAYLEIGH McALLISTER**  
 Wedding and events manager, Barony Castle Hotel, Borders

**Tell us about your job** I've been here for three years now, and work alongside my fellow co-ordinators Shannon and Vikki, managing weddings at our beautiful venue in Eddleston, near Peebles in the Borders. I guide couples from the enquiry stage all the way to the wedding itself. On the big day, I'm there from morning until night to ensure everything runs smoothly.

**What does an average working day look like for you?** Every day is different. I could be doing wedding show-rounds back to back or hosting a final-details meeting in the morning, and answering enquiries and writing reports all afternoon. It's never the same two days in a row, which I really enjoy.

**Roughly how long do you work with each couple?** It varies so much. I have planned weddings in two months but had up to three years for others. I always let couples know that I am there as much as they need me, whether they're keen to meet monthly or only during the final stages. On your wedding day, I'll be there from 9am until 9pm to see you through the full event.

[Below] Several different spaces, including a marquee, can accommodate the party



**What have you seen in the way of exciting entertainment at Barony Castle Hotel?**

We've had an incredible mix - caricaturists and magicians during the day and some really amazing bands in the evening. My list of recommended suppliers grows with every wedding held here - it's a privilege working with them.

**How can couples make the most of their co-ordinator without going overboard?**

I don't think there is an 'overboard!' We are here to assist as much as we possibly can. The venue is one of the biggest elements of the day and it needs to be right for the couple's vision. I feel much more at ease when people give me an exact idea of the layout they want, with pictures of potential

set-ups. As much as I love the freedom to arrange props where I think they look good, being given guidance ahead of time really reassures me that the day will be perfect.

**What sort of questions should a newly engaged couple be asking you at the first meeting?**

What is the venue's maximum capacity? What are the contract terms when booking? What are the costings, based on the guest numbers? What extras are included? This last one is especially important, as having little things supplied like the cake stand and knife, and the linens and so on makes a big difference to your workload.

**Any advice for future brides and grooms?**

The advice I give to all couples is to set a budget and stick to it! Do your research and create spreadsheets. Note down every bit of information you can to allow you to make the right choice, not just in terms of your venue but for all your suppliers. In the world of weddings, the 'vision' can take over, but you need to be realistic about what you can afford. Lastly, embrace how you're feeling. If you're stressed, tackle it head on and overcome it rather than procrastinate.

[www.baronycastle.com](http://www.baronycastle.com)

[Below] Light floods into the newly refurbished Eilbank Suite through floor-to-ceiling windows

